

## Web of Connections

*A lesson which teaches students about the causes of hunger, and how they are connected - often in surprising ways*

Age Range: Grades 7-9

Adapted from the Alabama 4-H War on Hunger Program and Universities Fighting World Hunger at Auburn University

### Overview

*Critical thinking, collaborative learning, problem-solving*

This activity will help foster an understanding of hunger in the context of other social issues. After participating in this activity, group members should be able to more effectively speak about the ways in which hunger is connected to other issues in the world which also impact the plight of those in poverty. Using a ball of string and cards that represent these various issues, group members will construct a “web” of connections between the given topics.

### Aims & Objectives

- To encourage young people to think about global and domestic hunger
- To demonstrate the connections between some of the root causes of hunger
- To encourage students to think about concrete ways in which they can help make a difference

### Materials

- 1 ball of yarn
- Up to 10 advocate title and description sheets (included below) printed correspondingly on cardstock, using both sides.

## Instructions

1. Using the information found at: Hunger 101 ([www.wfp.org/edu](http://www.wfp.org/edu)), revise the concept of Hunger and its effects with the class.
2. Divide the class into 10 groups/pairs and give each group/pair a card.
3. Explain to the class that during this activity they will look at the ways in which different issues are related to poverty, hunger, and disease. The card each group was given represents the type of advocate they are for a particular issue. As a representative of the concern on their card it is their job to explain the link between the group's concern and the rest of the class.
4. Allow each group time to discuss their cards and brainstorm possible ideas/connections.
5. To begin the activity, have the groups form a circle.
6. Start with the Hunger Advocate giving that group the ball of yarn
  - Encourage the groups to present as advocates for their positions
    - Ex. "I am advocating about the issue of hunger. One of the causes of hunger is poverty. People who are impoverished are unable to buy food, so they experience hunger. More than 963 million people in the world go to bed hungry every night. This is why I must join with the poverty advocate to work on both alleviating hunger and poverty.
  - The hunger advocate would then toss the ball of yarn to the advocate they are connected to (using the example above the yarn would be passed to the extreme poverty advocate).
7. The new advocate, the person with the yarn, should advocate for their position, then passing the yarn to another advocate.
  - This process should be continued until everyone has gone.
    - NOTE: If some advocates are connected more than once, this is okay.
8. Close the activity by discussing the following questions with your class. (students may have other discussion points to add to the list)

## Discussion Questions:

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1. What connections are the most obvious? The least?
2. What are some other connections that haven't already been made?
3. How does this exercise influence your feelings about the struggle against injustice?
4. Do you think more can be done if advocacy groups work together?

# HUNGER ADVOCATE



Around the world, ONE person in seven goes to bed hungry each night. In essence, hunger is the most extreme form of **poverty**, where individuals or families cannot afford to meet their most basic need for food. Undernourishment negatively affects people's **health**, productivity, sense of hope and overall well-being. We need to address hunger not just by giving food, but helping farmers in poor countries grow better crops and helping countries build farm-to-market roads so farmers can **supply** distant cities. (Source: *Hunger Report 2004, Bread for the World Institute. [www.bread.org](http://www.bread.org)*)

# HEALTH & HIV/AIDS ADVOCATE



More than 38 million people around the world are infected by HIV/AIDS, 25 million in Africa alone. The spreading HIV/AIDS epidemic has quickly become a major obstacle in the fight against **hunger** and **poverty** in developing countries. Because the majority of those falling sick with AIDS are young adults who normally harvest crops, food production has dropped dramatically in countries with high HIV/AIDS prevalence rates. Left untreated, AIDS leads to an early death for people in their most productive years who are needed to raise crops and families, **teach** school and care for the sick. (Source: *State of Food Insecurity in the World 2003. Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations*. <http://www.fao.org/docrep/006/j0083e/j0083e00.htm>)

# CLEAN WATER &

# SANITATION ADVOCATE



ONE person in seven has no access to clean water for drinking, cooking or washing. In addition to spreading disease, this has multiple negative effects — girls growing up in villages without water are far less likely to **attend school** because they're too busy spending hours walking to and from the nearest water source. Bad health caused by poor sanitation has a knock-on (secondary or incidental) effect on the family economy and **nutrition**. Building safe water supplies, improving sanitation through well-constructed latrines and teaching communities about safe hygiene practices are a few ways to improve the **health** of many around the globe.

(Source: *WaterAid* [www.wateraid.org](http://www.wateraid.org).)

# EDUCATION ADVOCATE



World Food  
Programme

Parents in Malawi know just as well as parents in Missouri that education is crucial to their children's future. But around the world, 104 million **children** do not go to school, because their parents cannot **afford** fees, books or uniforms. Providing education for **women and girls** would have a dramatic impact on the poor in developing countries. (Source *UNICEF: The State of the World's Children 2004* [http://www.unicef.org/sowc04/sowc04\\_girls\\_positive\\_force.html](http://www.unicef.org/sowc04/sowc04_girls_positive_force.html))

# ORPHANS & CHILDREN ADVOCATE



Every three seconds a child dies of causes related to extreme poverty, hunger and disease. Around the world, millions of children have already lost one or both parents to **AIDS**. Unless more is done, there will be 25 million of these children around the world by 2010. Children are more vulnerable to **disease**, because their bodies are weakened from **hunger**. (Source: *State of Food Insecurity in the World 2002. Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations*. <http://www.fao.org/docrep/005/y7352e/y7352e00.htm>.)



# FAIR TRADE ADVOCATE



As much as people in poor countries appreciate development assistance, no one wants to rely on a handout — they want to trade their way out of **poverty** — but international rules make it difficult. Farm and trade policies in the United States and the European Union are creating hardships for family farmers everywhere. Seventy-five percent of poor people in developing countries—some 900 million people—depend on **agriculture** for their livelihood. A fair trade system would give people in poor countries the chance to earn their way out of poverty by participating in the world economy. *(Source OxFam America [www.oxfamamerica.org](http://www.oxfamamerica.org))*

# ANTI-CORRUPTION ADVOCATE



While corruption is harmful to all governments, losing resources to corrupt leaders is particularly devastating in poor countries where every dollar lost results in one less child in **school** or one less well dug to provide **clean water**. Contrary to popular opinion, a large portion of the United States Agency for International Development is channeled through existing private relief and development agencies, like Catholic World Relief, World Vision, CARE, Mercy Corps and many others. **Education** is essential for understanding the reality of global development. (Source: USAID, [www.usaid.gov](http://www.usaid.gov)) g)

# DEBT CANCELLATION ADVOCATE



Every year Sub-Saharan Africa, the poorest region of the world, spends \$14.5 billion repaying debts to the world's richest countries and international institutions such as the World Bank and International Monetary Fund. For example, the civil conflict in Burundi resulted in an increase in health problems related to malaria, a decrease in education for children and emotional trauma from years of civil strife. But the money needed to address these concerns is diverted to pay off international debts. Though we've made efforts to relieve the unpayable debts of many nations, poor countries still spend more each year on debt than on **health care or education.** (Source: AFSC, <http://afsc.org/africa-debt/talking-points.htm>)

# EXTREME POVERTY ADVOCATE



Extreme poverty means living on less than \$1 a day, unimaginable to us as Americans. In the developing world, more than 1.2 billion people currently live below the international poverty line. Many people are unable to feed their families, because they cannot make a decent wage to buy or produce **food**. (Source: *Human Development Report 2003, Millennium Development Goals: A compact among nations to end human poverty, United Nations Development Programme. [www.undp.org/hdr2003/](http://www.undp.org/hdr2003/)*)

# WOMEN & GIRLS

## ADVOCATE



Throughout the world, women work to provide for themselves and their families. They labor hard, but often their work is valued far less than that of men. In many families, women and girls are the last in line not just for food but for medical care as well. Pregnant women, new mothers who breastfeed infants, and children are among the most at risk of **malnourishment**. (Source: *World Health Organization*. <http://www.who.int/en/> )



# HUNGER ADVOCATE



# HEALTH & HIV/AIDS ADVOCATE



# **CLEAN WATER & SANITATION ADVOCATE**





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# ORPHANS & CHILDREN ADVOCATE



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